

Ten Myths About Israel: Genocide and Racism Unmasked

Review of Ilan Pappé's Book

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Is Israel and its infamous Wall of Separation representative of a modern evolving democratic state, based upon Biblical principles and teachings, as applied towards the original indigenous Palestinian peoples of Palestine, or is it an example of yet another ethnic-cleansing, apartheid state, possessive of the same genocidal-racist tendencies as those 19th century colonial-imperialistic powers – like the United States, Canada, Australia and South Africa – who also once invaded and committed wholesale destruction of other ancient indigenous peoples entire ways of life; sweeping their survivors aside onto reservations, reserves and Bantustan-type compounds to be ultimately ignored and forgotten?

Professor Ilan Pappé (picture below), one of Israel's most radical dissident historians, who now teaches and writes in exile, amply answers these questions in his latest book *Ten Myths About Israel*. A mere 148 pages long, this historical masterpiece reads more like a voluminous epic that eloquently offers up a clear, concise, arguably-undisputable, record of the true indigenous history of Palestine, the Palestinians and their ethnic-cleansing at the hands of the Jews ever since the *Nakbah* in 1948. The *Nakbah* a time when: 700,000 Palestinian Arabs were violently expelled; 400 to 600 of their villages sacked and destroyed; with eleven of their twelve major towns destroyed that virtually extinguished the urban life of Palestine. To the Israeli people it is celebrated as the time of their *Declaration of Independence*. But to the Palestinian Arabs it is simply known as the *Time of the Catastrophe*; which, 50 years later, in 2008, ultimately led to the Gaza War and Israel's *Operation Cast Lead* that killed a further 1,400 Palestinians, 926 of which were unarmed civilians, and then again, in 2012, during Israel's *Operation Pillar of Cloud*, when another 174 Palestinian's were killed, 107 of which were innocent civilians; later to be followed by Israel's *Operation Protective Edge* that further killed another 2300 Gazans, 1492 of them civilians, 551 of which were children and 209 woman, with the wounded numbering over 10,000, among which were 3,371 children, which also destroyed some 17,000 homes and partially destroyed another 30,000 homes.



Such facts and figures to be gleaned from Pappé's writings, and what caused them, affords the world with a seminal platform for the 21st century from which to simultaneously look backwards and forwards towards the true historical origins and identity of not only Israel and Zionism towards the indigenous Arab peoples of modern *Eretz Israel*, but also the similar contemporary state of many other longer-standing colonial-imperialistic powers in

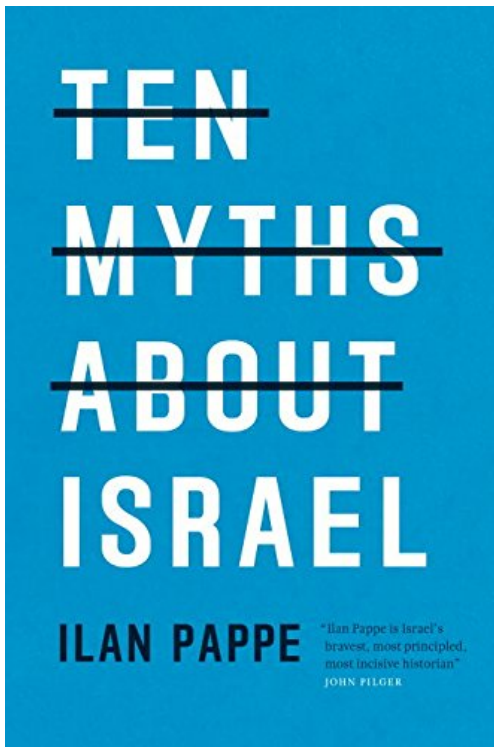
the world and their own treatment of the indigenous peoples in their midst, whose ancient homelands and natural resources continue to be coveted by these world powers for their own empire-building pursuits.

Avi Shlaim of the Guardian declares Ilan Pappé to be “one of the few Israeli students of the conflict in Palestine who writes about the Palestinian side of the story with real knowledge and empathy”; while the New Statesman deems Pappé to be, “Along with Edward Said, the most eloquent writer of Palestinian history” John Pilger, the acclaimed Australian writer-journalist further calls Pappé, “Israel’s bravest, most principled, most incisive historian.”; while this writer sees Professor Pappé as more like Israel’s own I.F. Stone or Howard Zinn, who dares to expose and elucidate upon the dark underbelly of Israel’s sordid history that few others ever dare to touch upon.”

To this end, whatever one’s take, *Ten Myths About Israel* goes a long way to dispel all the disinformation, misinformation and mythology that daily is propagated by the corporate media’s spin doctors who would have the world’s masses continue to forever adhere to such false beliefs as: “Palestine Was An Empty Land”; “The Jews Were a People Without a Land”; “Zionism is Judaism”; “Zionism Is Not Colonialism”; “The Palestinians Voluntarily Left Their Homelands in 1948”; “The June 1967 War Was a War of No Choice”; “Israel is the Only Democracy in the Middle East”; “The Oslo Accord of 1993 Was/Is a Genuine Peace Process”; “The Palestinians Second Intifada of the 1980’s Began a Terrorist Movement Against Israel”, and finally: “The Victory of Hamas in the election of 2006 Began a Terrorist Movement Against Israel”.

Students of Western Civilization, knowledgeable of the similar genocidal policies and mythologies perpetrated in countries like the United States, Canada, Britain Australia and South Africa against their own indigenous peoples – who have also borne the brunt of Western imperialism and suffered the same loss of self-determination, nationhood independence and the “Right To Return & Reclaim Their Ancestral Heritage” – will at once recognize in Pappé’s writings the same cultural patterns that repeat themselves in modern-day Israel.

Long after the point of fact when whatever indigenous peoples have finally been conquered and stripped of most if not all of their former homelands and natural resources, whomever the invader-aggressor may be always finally gets around to making the same predictable response. No matter how much wholesale destruction, rape, murder, assassinations and massacres may have been committed against the indigenous peoples in question, once all the mayhem has settled and the issue an all but moot point, the perpetrators in their magnanimity find it in themselves to speak out in favor of “acts of reconciliation”, public declarations of “I’m Sorry”, and calls for “Reparations”. Yet too often, though even well-intended, to many on the receiving end such words have the hollow ring of tokenism to them. Yet even here, by the many unresolved issues that Pappé raises about the Israeli government’s racist attitudes towards Palestinian Arabs and denial of any culpability for their woeful plight, even such words of apology still seem a very long way from ever happening.



But as Pappé clearly points out, the bright side is that the existing Civil Society among both the Israeli and Palestinian peoples unabatedly do speak out about what their political leadership too often continues to deny, ignore or neglect to place at the center of their national agenda. They know, too, that in spite of whatever reticence exists among many to ever speak out, the majority of Jews in Israel and Arabs in Palestine already know exactly what has been happening every day on the ground for many decades since 1948. They are not, as Pappé pointedly declares, “deaf to all the cries, pain and devastation of those killed, raped or wounded throughout 1948....arrested and imprisoned in the 1950’s....massacred in the village of Kafir Qasim in 1956.....or when citizens of the state were murdered by the army just because they were Palestinians....They know about the war crimes committed throughout the 1967 War and callous bombings of refugee camps in 1982....They have not forgotten the physical abuse meted out to Palestinian youth in the occupied territories in the 1980’s and afterwards....Israel Jews are not deaf and can still today hear the voices of the military officers ordering the execution of innocent people and the laughter of the soldiers standing by and watching....They are also not blind. They have seen the remains of the 531 destroyed villages and the ruined neighborhoods..... They see what every Israeli can see but for the most part chooses not to.....the remnants of villages under the houses of the Kibbutzim and beneath the pine trees of the JNF (Jewish National Fund) forests....They have not forgotten what happened even when the rest of their society has.....Perhaps because of that they understand fully the connection between the 1948 ethnic-cleansing and the events that followed to the present....They also refuse to ignore the obvious connection between the building of the wall and the wider policy of ethnic-cleansing....The expulsions of 1948 and the imprisonments of people within walls today are the inevitable consequences of the same racist ethnic ideology.....Inside and outside Israel, Palestinian NGO’s such as BADIC, ADRID and Al-Awada are coordinating their struggles to preserve the memory of 1948 and explain why it is crucial to engage with the events of that year for the sake of the future.

Ilan Pappé’s tiny book that speaks to the *Ten Myths About Isreal* is a blockbuster must-read for every human being in the world who considers themselves to be a member of their own country’s Civil Society. Even more so, it’s an even more important must-read for every human being who still does not.

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